



News Release

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

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STATE TURNS DOWN WATER RIGHT APPLICATION FROM MOUNTAIN HOME AREA FOUNDATION

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A state water rights hearing officer found he was unable to approve an application for new domestic water rights intended for a small proposed veterans housing development near Mountain Home, the Idaho Department of Water Resources announced today.

Citing the project as a “laudable goal of unquestionable merit,” the IDWR hearing officer ruled the Foundation that made the application did not present sufficient evidence required to meet its burden of proof that shows the proposed use of water would satisfy the requirements of Idaho law.

The IDWR hearing officer especially noted there are other ways the “meritorious proposal” could be accomplished. These include methods such as transfer of existing water rights. The agency pledged to help the Foundation explore these options if it decides to continue to pursue the project.

The National Defense Veterans Foundation of Mountain Home applied last fall for a water right allowing the year round use of 0.19 cubic feet per second of water (123,000 gallons per day). The water was to be taken from an existing well and used in five homes for veterans to be built on a site 1.5 miles south of the city.

Local farmers holding existing rights to use water from the aquifer protested the proposed appropriation of water. They cited data that documented declines of up to 60 feet in ground water levels in the area, including the well from which the water would have been taken.

A contested case hearing was held in the case on April 19 in Mountain Home. After taking testimony and evidence from both sides, the IDWR hearing office found that the Foundation had not met various requirements outlined in Idaho water law. A copy of the recommended order is available in the Special Interest Items section of the IDWR web site at: www.idwr.state.id.us.

The Foundation presented no evidence whether the use of water would impact other existing water rights; did not submit any evidence showing there was sufficient water; did not present evidence that it had sufficient financial resources to construct the project; and proposed a project use that is different from that permitted by Elmore County.